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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Friday, August 12, 1938.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "TOMATOES MAKE NEWS IN AUGUST". Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Nearly every August, somebody has something new to say about the tomato. If it isn't new, it's something we're glad to remember. How it was once thought poisonous and called the "love apple". And is now one of our most highly prized vitamin-rich foods--a regular vegetable fairy tale.

Some accounts say that Sir Walter Raleigh was responsible for the romantic tradition of the tomato. Sir Raleigh once presented a luxurious tomato plant in full fruit to Queen Elizabeth, as a token of his admiration. Thereafter many a knight sent bright red tomatoes as a love token to the lady of his choice.

And August is the appropriate month to remember all this. For through the country as a whole, more gardens are producing tomatoes during August and September than at any other time. Tomatoes are at their sun-ripened best now. And prices are always lowest during these months. Anybody, no matter how ample or limited the food budget, can afford to indulge in large, fresh, red tomatoes this time of year.

The latest report of the U. S. Department of Agriculture brings us this interesting item of news on our tomato-eating habits:

"Dietary studies recently completed by the Bureau of Home Economics, show that city families of white employed workers used about 27 to 37 pounds of fresh and canned tomatoes and tomato juice for every man, woman and child during 1935-36"--quite a pile of tomatoes, 27 to 37 pounds per person a year.

And the report goes on to reaffirm the high nutrition rating of the tomato. It is a good source of vitamin C, which we need to renew our supply of every day because it can not be stored in the body. Fortunately the tomato does not lose its vitamin C in cooking or canning.

Recent tests made by the Bureau of Home Economics indicate that when home canning is done right the vitamin C content of tomatoes remains practically "as is". Also, scarcely any of the vitamin content is lost by allowing opened tomato juice to stand in the refrigerator for a few days.

But there is more vitamin C in some tomatoes than in others. There is even a difference in the vitamin content of the same variety from the same patch on different days. But even those that have the least vitamin C rate as "good" sources.

Although the tomato built up its reputation with the dietitians because of its vitaminC content, it has other important food values. Ripe tomatoes are

rich in vitamin A, another vitamin that there's likely to be too little of, especially if people are trying to economize on food. Ripe and green tomatoes both supply vitamin B. They also have some iron and small amounts of other essential minerals. Also their low calorie or fuel value make them a good summertime food.

And it's easy to can tomatoes at home, so if you have plenty of tomatoes in your garden, you will want to save some for winter. You won't need a pressure cooker or any other expensive equipment for it's safe to can tomatoes by the waterbath method. The acid of the tomato helps destroy harmful organisms at the temperature of boiling water. But don't can tomatoes from the open kettle, for heat and air are sure to destroy some of their precious vitamin C.

And here's a hint on making tomato cocktail--fresh tomato cocktail that captures the flavor of the red-ripe vegetable as it comes from the garden.

"For this cocktail select very red and very ripe tomatoes. Wash and chop the raw tomatoes. Then force them through a sieve to extract the juice and some of the pulp. To give the drink a little more zest, allow slices of raw onion to stand in the juice until the flavors have blended. Then take out the onion and season to taste with freshly squeezed lemon juice and a dash of horseradish or tabasco sauce."

And here's a hint for cooking tomatoes. Fried tomatoes are especially delicious if you hold in the juices by dipping the slices in egg and then in fine bread crumbs before frying. It's a good way to use partly green tomatoes, too, for it's easier to handle firm slices than very soft ones.

Of course there are dozens of other good ways to serve tomatoes. Every family has its favorite dishes, and it's time to try them all out again now.

This August tomatoes are more popular than ever with the American people, and this garden fruit, or vegetable if you prefer, is at its best--and cheapest.

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